

To The Editor
THE STATE
P.O. Box 1333
Columbia, S.C. 29202

Dear Sir:

In reference to Max Kaster's letter of October 6th regarding churches' taking action on the political process: he criticizes Flynn Harrell's recent column on this issue, completely misquoting and misunderstanding his statements. Mr. Harrell explains that Rep. Jones has reintroduced his bill "Houses of Worship Free Speech Restoration Act" in Congress which would allow houses of worship to support or oppose candidates while continuing their tax exempt status. This would be unconstitutional as other not-for-profit organizations with tax exempt status would remain prohibited from engaging in the same acts.

It is important for citizens to understand that under current law religious leaders are already allowed to speak out on political issues which is different from taking a stand on individual candidates.

Aside from being unconstitutional, as Mr. Harrell and others have pointed out, think of the conflict that allowing churches to take a position on a candidate would likely cause in the congregation. It would also allow spiritual leaders to become potential power brokers to be lobbied by politicians or groups and used as endorsers of partisan campaigns. Our founders did not intend for church and state to be thus aligned.

Barbara W. Moxon